

## **Speech or Language Impairment Definition**

“Speech or Language Impairment” means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

### **Criteria for Initial Determination of Eligibility - Language**

A language disorder is present when:

- A. the child consistently exhibits inappropriate use in any of the structures of language (e.g., morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics) as measured by language sampling or other clinical tasks;
- B. the child’s language functioning is significantly below the child’s abilities as measured by two (2) or more standardized language assessments. Significantly below is defined as two (2) standard deviations below the mean for children 3 to 5 years of age but not eligible for kindergarten; one standard deviation below cognitive ability for children who are kindergarten age eligible through age 8 and 1.5 standard deviation below cognitive ability for children who are age 9 and older;
- C. the language disorder adversely affects the child’s educational performance;
- D. the language disorder is not a result of dialectal differences or second language influence.

### **Professional Judgment**

A child may also be deemed eligible if the evaluation documents through formal and informal assessment that a language deficit is present even though the standard scores do not meet the criteria in B above. In such cases, sufficient data must be presented in the evaluation report to document the existence of the language deficit.

### **Criteria for Determination of Initial Eligibility - Sound System Disorder**

A Sound System Disorder, which includes articulation and/or phonology, is present when:

- A. the student exhibits a delay of correct sound production based on accepted normative data. The child’s sound system is evaluated based on a single word test and/or a sentence/phrase repetition task and a connected speech sample;
- B. consideration must be given to the type of error recorded (substitutions, omissions, distortions and/or additions). These errors may be described as single sound errors or errors in phonological patterns;
- C. a Sound System Disorder may also be present if multiple errors in the child’s speech compromise intelligibility and/or listener perception even though the recorded errors are considered within normal developmental guidelines;
- D. the Sound System Disorder adversely affects the child’s educational performance;